

Washington State Board of Education

**First Annual Report  
on the Status of the  
Certificate of Mastery Study  
Committee**

Presented to the  
House and Senate Education Committees

by

Gary Gainer, President  
State Board of Education

January 8, 2001

**DATE:** January 8, 2001

**TO:** Members, House Education Committee  
Members, Senate Education Committee

**FROM:** Gary Gainer, President  
State Board of Education

**RE:** 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report – SBE Certificate of Mastery Study Committee

I am pleased to submit this first annual report to the legislative education committees on the work to date of the State Board of Education's Certificate of Mastery (CoM) Study Committee. This report is required under State Board rule adopted in January 2000.

If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Larry Davis, the State Board's Executive Director, at (360) 753-6715, (360)-586-2357 [FAX], or "ldavis@ospi.wednet.edu".

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

CoM Study Committee Members	1
CoM Study Committee Mission, Work Goals, Timeline	2
Background and Introduction	3
Status Report	4
<hr/>	
Appendix A	5
Appendix B	6
Appendix C	7-8
Appendix D	9-10
Appendix E	11

## **Certificate of Mastery Study Committee**

---

### Members (23)

**Gary Gainer**, Chair, State Board of Education President  
**Ron Woldeit**, Member, State Board of Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
**Carly Cyr**, Student Representative, SBE, Senior, Prairie HS, Battle Ground SD  
**Cheryl Mayo**, Deputy Superintendent, Learning and Teaching, OSPI  
**Greg Hall**, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment & Research, OSPI  
**Denny Hurtado**, Program Supervisor for Indian Education and Title I, Office of Higher Education, Certification, and Community Outreach, OSPI  
**Patrick Patrick**, Chair, A+ Commission  
**Dr. Gay Selby**, Vice Chair, Higher Education Coordinating Board  
**Tom Koenninger**, Member, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Editor, The Vancouver Columbian Newspaper  
**Rich Nafziger**, Chair, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Executive Policy Advisor, Governor's Executive Policy Office  
**Linda Hernandez**, Citizen  
**Lynn Fielding**, School Director, Kennewick School District  
**Terry Densley**, School Director, Wilbur School District  
**Marv Sather**, Washington Education Association, Retired Teacher  
**Andy Wheeler**, Region 1 Representative, Washington Alternative Learning Association  
**Dennis Wallace**, President, Washington-Association for Career and Technical Education, Vocational Director, Yelm High School  
**Don Hanson**, Director, Special Education, Burlington-Edison School District  
**Robert McMullen**, Principal, Kamiakin High School, Kennewick School District  
**Gary Kipp**, Principal, Mark Morris High School, Longview School District  
**Nick Brossoit**, Superintendent, Tumwater School District  
**Barbara Clausen**, Director, Research/Professional Growth/Evaluation, Shoreline School District  
**Steve Mullin**, Vice President, Washington Roundtable  
**Marc Frazer**, Vice President for Education Policy, Washington Mutual

## **Certificate of Mastery Study Committee**

---

### **Committee Mission**

Examine and make recommendations to the State Board of Education on validity and reliability issues and conduct a review and analysis of the requirement that students obtain a certificate (of mastery) as a condition for high school graduation.

### **Committee Work Goals**

1. Make a recommendation to the State Board of Education about the validity and reliability of the secondary Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).
2. Make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding an evaluation of the readiness of the system to support the secondary WASL as a graduation requirement.
3. Make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding what to do for students who cannot pass the secondary WASL.

### **Committee Timeline**

The committee's target date for making recommendations to the State Board of Education is April/May 2002. The final date for submitting recommendations to the State Board is May 2003.

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In 1993, the Legislature passed the Improvement of Student Achievement Act. The law states, in part:

*“After a determination is made by the state board of education that the high school assessment system has been implemented and that it is sufficiently reliable and valid, successful completion of the high school assessment shall lead to a certificate of mastery. The certificate of mastery shall be obtained by most students at about the age of sixteen, and is evidence that the student has successfully mastered the essential academic learning requirements during his or her educational career. The certificate of mastery shall be required for graduation but shall not be the only requirement for graduation.”*

**RCW 28A.655.060(3)(c)**

In 1997, the Commission on Student Learning submitted to the legislative education committees a report, Recommendations on the Washington Certificate of Mastery (from the Commission’s Certificate of Mastery ad hoc Committee). The report recommended formal implementation of the CoM beginning with the graduating Class of 2006. (Copies available upon request to the State Board of Education office.)

In 1999, legislation was introduced, that did not ultimately pass, which would have established in law that the CoM was formally required for graduation beginning with the Class of 2008. As a result of dialogue with key legislators, the State Board indicated that it could and would use its rule-making authority to set a target effective date for the Certificate of Mastery.

In January 2000, the State Board of Education enacted a new rule establishing 2008 as the target graduating class that will have to possess the CoM in order to graduate. (See **Appendix A**) At the same time, in another rule, the Board established the CoM Study Committee. (See **Appendix B**)

## STATUS REPORT

Immediate Past President Linda Carpenter appointed the CoM Study Committee members in late May 2000. As of the date of this report, the committee has met three times: June 30, 2000; September 28, 2000; and November 28, 2000. The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2001, and will be from 3:00-7:00<sup>pm</sup> at the Burien Conference Center of the State Superintendent's Office.

The significant accomplishments to date have been adoption of a mission -- the same as under WAC 180-51-064(3) -- and work goals (see page 2). The next several meetings will be devoted to presentations and discussions of key validity and reliability issues. A starting point list of issues identified thus far by the committee is provided (see **Appendix C**), along with issues listed under SB 6418 from the 2000 legislative session. We have sought guidance from the Legislature in the form of letters to the committee chairs and ranking member. (See **Appendix D**).

The CoM Study Committee will meet every other month during the next year. A final report and recommendations will be submitted to the State Board of Education by May 2003. The Board has set April 2004 as its target date to make a decision about the validity and reliability of the secondary WASL.

A key to the committee's effort on the Board's behalf, and the Board's statutory charge is to conduct a responsible study that is thorough in nature. Toward this end, funding is a concern to the State Board. At the moment, the Board's current budget has permitted a support level of approximately \$1,000. In our 2001-03 operating budget request, the Board is seeking a modest \$30,000 for direct committee support (see **Appendix E**).

The committee will keep you informed as it moves forward in carrying out its work on behalf of students in Washington.

**Appendix A** WAC 180-51-063 Certificate of mastery -- High school graduation requirement -- Effective date.

**Appendix B** WAC 180-51-064 Certificate of mastery -- Validity and reliability study.

**Appendix C** Starting point list of issues identified by the CoM Study Committee relating to the readiness of the system to support the secondary Washington Assessment of Student Learning as a graduation requirement

**Appendix D** Letter sent to Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Senator Bill Finkbeiner, Representative Dave Quall, and Representative Gigi Talcott

**Appendix E** SBE 2001-03 budget request for CoM Study Committee support

## **APPENDIX A**

**WAC 180-51-063 Certificate of mastery -- High school graduation requirement -- Effective date.** (1) Pursuant to RCW 28A.655.060 (3)(c):

(a) The certificate of mastery shall be a graduation requirement, but not the only requirement for graduation from high school; and

(b) The state board of education is responsible for determining when the secondary Washington assessment of student learning has been implemented and is sufficiently valid and reliable.

(2)(a) The state board of education establishes the 2007-08 school year as the first year in which graduating high school students shall be required to have attained the state certificate of mastery in order to graduate, in addition to other state and local graduation requirements.

(b) The state board of education fully recognizes that a higher standard of validity and reliability must be applied when the result of the assessment affects the ability of an individual student to receive a high school diploma. Therefore, the state board of education will continue to monitor the high school level Washington assessment of student learning. If the board finds that the assessment is lacking in this higher level of validity or reliability, or both, by the beginning of the 2004-05 school year, the state board may change the effective date of the certificate of mastery, for state graduation purposes, to a later school year.

(c) Beginning the 2007-08 school year, the certificate of mastery shall consist of the subject areas under the student learning goals for which a Washington assessment of student learning secondary assessment has been implemented and declared valid and reliable for graduation purposes. It is expected that the initial certificate of mastery will be comprised of reading, writing, communications, and mathematics.

(d) Beginning the 2009-10 school year, the certificate of mastery shall include science if a Washington assessment of student learning secondary assessment has been implemented and declared valid and reliable for this subject area.

(e) As determined by the state board of education, in consultation with the legislature and the academic achievement and accountability commission, successful completion of the Washington assessment of student learning secondary assessment in social studies may be required to achieve the certificate of mastery or may lead to an endorsement on the high school transcript.

(f) As determined by the state board of education, in consultation with the legislature and the academic achievement and accountability commission, successful completion of the Washington assessment of student learning secondary assessment in arts and health and fitness may lead to an endorsement on the high school transcript.

(g) Beginning with graduating students in 2001, attainment of the state certificate of mastery may be noted on the student's transcript pursuant to written district policy.

(3) Notwithstanding WAC 180-18-055 and 180-51-107, subsection (2) of this section shall not be waived.

(4) The certificate of mastery shall not be a graduation requirement for students who receive home-based instruction under RCW 28A.200.101(3) nor for students attending private schools under RCW 28A.195.010(6).

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.230.090. 00-04-047, § 180-51-063, filed 1/27/00, effective 2/27/00.]

## **APPENDIX B**

**WAC 180-51-064 Certificate of mastery -- Validity and reliability study.** (1) The state board of education recognizes that a state investment in activities to verify the validity and reliability of the secondary Washington assessment of student learning for graduation purposes is critical. Therefore, the state board will work with the legislature to establish funding support for validity and reliability substantiation activities.

(2) The state board recognizes that there remain unanswered questions about the certificate of mastery. In order to facilitate the necessary dialogue to address the questions and issues, the board will establish a certificate of mastery validity and reliability advisory committee. At a minimum, the advisory committee shall include representatives from the academic achievement and accountability commission, the office of superintendent of public instruction, the public, the business community, and education stakeholder groups.

(3) The advisory committee shall examine and make recommendations to the state board of education on validity and reliability issues and conduct a review and analysis of the requirement that students obtain a certificate as a condition for high school graduation.

(4) The advisory committee shall submit to the state board a final report and recommendations not later than the board's meeting in May 2003.

(5) By the second Monday of January 2001, and no later than the second Monday of each year thereafter, the state board of education will provide to the house of representatives and senate committees on education, a progress report on the deliberations of the certificate of mastery validity and reliability advisory committee. The state board will submit any proposed policy change based on recommendations of the advisory committee to the house of representatives and senate education committees for review and comment before the change is implemented by the state board under its rule-making authority.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.230.090. 00-04-047, § 180-51-064, filed 1/27/00, effective 2/27/00.]

## **APPENDIX C**

**Starting point list of issues identified by the CoM Study Committee relating to the readiness of the system to support the secondary Washington Assessment of Student Learning as a graduation requirement:**

- To what extent is the curriculum aligned to the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?
- Are instructional strategies reflective of the knowledge and skills students will need to have to meet the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?
- Are the instructional materials aligned to the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?
- Have teachers and administrators received training targeted to performance assessment techniques and strategies?
- Have teacher preparation programs aligned their curriculum and teaching methods with the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?
- Have prospective teacher candidates received training in their preparation program on performance assessment techniques and strategies?
- Have prospective teacher candidates received training in their preparation program on the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?
- Have students been given the appropriate opportunity to address the Student Learning Goals and gain proficiency in regard to the EALRs prior to taking the WASL?
- Have parents and the community been sufficiently engaged to understand the Student Learning Goals and EALRs and the purpose of the WASL?

**APPENDIX C**  
(continued)

**Readiness elements/factors listed in SB 6418 (2000 legislative session):**

- (a) The curriculum and instruction are aligned with the assessments;
- (b) Students have the opportunity to receive instruction aligned with the assessments;
- (c) The assessments measure student learning accurately, including but not limited to, finding that the scoring of the assessments is valid; the standards for achievement on the assessments are clearly and appropriately established; a process is established to protect the integrity of the assessments; the items on the assessments are reviewed and updated; and the assessment is reliable, which includes internal consistency, interrater reliability, the ability for the results to be generalized across tasks, and reliability of the cut score;
- (d) Educators have training in administering the assessments;
- (e) Educational issues have been addressed including assessments in the early and middle grades, procedures for retesting students, and help for students who do not meet the standards on the assessments;
- (f) A reporting system is in place to accurately report the results of the assessments.
- (g) The development of the assessment meets accepted test construction procedures;
- (h) The content of the assessment represents an adequate sampling of the academic subject being assessed;
- (i) There is a correlation between the scores on the state-wide standardized norm-reference assessment and the Washington assessment on student learning;
- (j) Scoring procedures are dependable and free from random errors of measurement;
- (k) The passing standards or cut-scores ensure reasonable student proficiency and are empirically reliable; and
- (l) There is a standardization of test administration.

## APPENDIX D

December 13, 2000

*Letter sent to Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Senator Bill Finkbeiner, Representative Dave Quall, and Representative Gigi Talcott*

Dear

As you know, the State Board of Education has established a Certificate of Mastery Study Committee. The rule creating this committee and its charge, along with a list of the members, is attached. At the committee's most recent meeting, it decided the charge set forth in the rule would be its mission. It also set forth three goals:

1. Make a recommendation to the State Board of Education about the validity and reliability of the secondary WASL.
2. Make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding an evaluation of the readiness of the system to support the secondary WASL as a graduation requirement.
3. Make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding what to do for students who cannot pass the secondary WASL.

The next meeting of the committee is Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-7:00<sup>pm</sup>, OSPI Burien Conference Center. In planning for the meeting, it will be helpful for the committee to know with more clarity what the Legislature contemplated in adopting the following statutory language:

**“RCW 28A.655.060(3)(c)** After a determination is made by the state board of education that the high school assessment system has been implemented and that it is sufficiently reliable and valid, successful completion of the high school assessment shall lead to a certificate of mastery. The certificate of mastery shall be required for graduation but shall not be the only requirement for graduation.”

December 13, 2000

Page Two

More specifically, the committee would appreciate your insight and answers on the following questions relating to the statute.

- Is a “high school assessment system” limited to only those subjects for which a secondary WASL exists at this point in time, or is it intended to be inclusive of all the subjects in the state Student Learning Goals?
- Does a “high school assessment system” allow the State Board to make separate declarations of validity and reliability about each component subject of the system, or does the Board have to base its decision on the totality of the secondary WASL system?
- Is “sufficiently valid and reliable” limited to the technical elements of the secondary WASL?
- Does “sufficiently valid and reliable” include the readiness of the education system to provide each student their appropriate opportunity to learn the Student Learning Goals and EALRs?

The committee will carry forward with its charge, make its best effort to follow legislative intent of the law, and proceed toward developing recommendations to the State Board of Education. I want to assure you that the State Board will keep you informed of the committee’s progress.

Sincerely,

Gary Gainer, President  
State Board of Education  
Chair, CoM Study Committee

Attachments

## **APPENDIX E**

### 2001-03 Operating Budget Request State Board of Education

#### **ITEM:**

Certificate of Mastery Committee. This committee is responsible for researching information to enhance [its] ability to recommend to the State Board of Education if the 10<sup>th</sup> grade WASL is valid and reliable for graduation purposes. By law, the Certificate of Mastery shall be a graduation requirement, but not the only requirement for graduation from high school. The Board has established the 2007-08 school year as the first year in which graduating high school students shall be required to have attained the state Certificate of Mastery. If the Board finds by the beginning of the 2004-05 school year that the WASL 10 is lacking in validity and reliability, it may change the effective date of the Certificate of Mastery. [The] committee is interested in contracting with a consultant for expertise and updated information regarding the determination of validity and reliability. The contract will be \$30,000.

In addition, the State Board is seeking funds to pay the committee members for their travel and to cover meals. At this time, the Board is paying only for meals. The request is for \$6,000 for six meetings.